

A scion of the House of David and one of those Hebrew rulers who under the title of 'Princes of the Captivity' exercised a certain authority over their own people by the tolerant permission of the Mahomedan conquerors, Alroy conceives the idea of winning back the independence of Israel and restoring her departed glory. The slaying of a Seljuk chief, who has offered violence to his sister, compels him to fly from his home, and encouraged by a visit to Jabaster, a priest who had been the mentor of his youth, and who had diligently fostered his high ideals and ambitions, he sets out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to win the token of his election. There, after manifold sufferings and adventures, he arrives; and there in the Tombs of the Kings, amid incidents of supernatural awe, he receives the sceptre of King Solomon from the hands of his great ancestor himself. With full assurance of his mission, and supported by Jabaster, he now raises the standard of revolt and sweeps through Western Asia on a tide of victory and conquest. But with constant success his belief in himself grows overweening, and he begins to dream of other things than Jabaster's lofty but narrow aim of re-establishing the theocracy.

The world is mine; and shall I yield the prize, the universal and heroic prize, to realize the dull tradition of some dreaming priest and consecrate a legend? . . . Is the Lord of Hosts so slight a God, that we must place a barrier to His sovereignty, and fix the boundaries of Omnipotence between the Jordan and the Lebanon? . . . Universal Empire must not be founded on sectarian prejudices and exclusive rights.¹

Convincing himself by such reasoning as this, he makes Bagdad the centre of his kingdom, and is there ensnared by a Delilah in the form of the daughter of the Caliph. Jabaster and the more fanatical spirits presently rise in revolt, and the friend of Alroy's youth falls a victim.